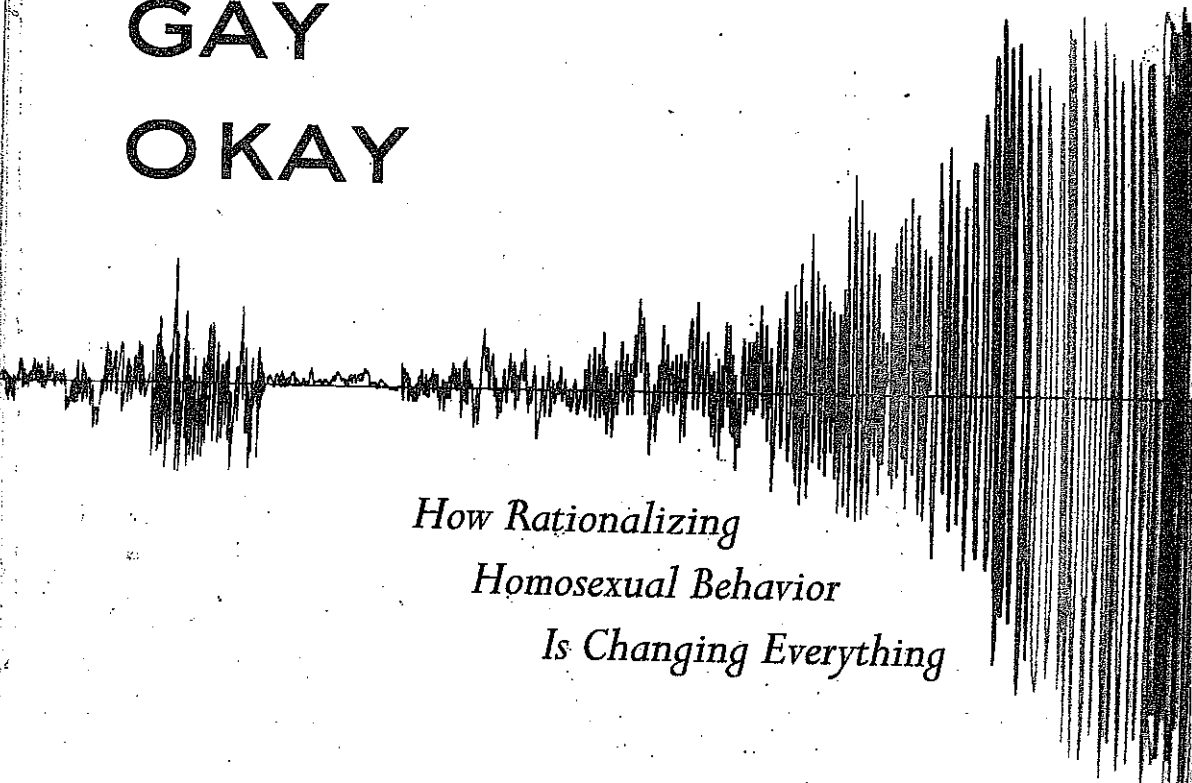


Robert R. Reilly

MAKING
GAY
OKAY



*How Rationalizing
Homosexual Behavior
Is Changing Everything*

IGNATIUS

researchers discovered a certain gene in 77 percent of the alcoholic patients they studied. There may be a missing chromosome that predisposes certain people to alcoholism; others seem to acquire alcoholism through their behavior. In either case, drunkenness is no less evil because of an inherent predisposition to it. Likewise, sodomy. Of course, it is very hard to live with such predispositions, and profound sympathy and assistance is due to those who suffer from them. The worst disservice that could be done in either case, however, would be to encourage or participate in the celebration of the afflictions, as in Gay Pride Day. Why is Gay Pride Day any less absurd than an Alcoholic Pride Day would be? Both conditions exist as aberrations, as abnormalities in the light of what is normal by Nature. To substitute an abnormality for normality destroys the distinction between the two and closes off the path to recovery.

Alcoholics, by definition, are alcoholics for life. If they wish to remain sober, they must never drink again. Are homosexuals like this also? Will they forever suffer from (or celebrate) their inclination? There is mixed evidence regarding this. Of those wanting to change, some have been able to; some have not. Except in the very real terms of personal hardship, however, it does not really matter. After all, *everyone* is disposed to some moral disorder or another. The immutability of the condition or of the inclination is irrelevant to the moral character of the acts to which they are predisposed. Of course, some homosexual apologists find the genetic excuse exculpatory. Therefore, they need it for the rationalization of their behavior: If I am this way by Nature, how can I help what I do? The alcoholic could use the same justification for his drunkenness. In neither case does the inclination neuter free will or remove responsibility for actions. To say otherwise robs the human actor of moral dignity.

This issue is also extremely important because homosexual activists wish to establish the immutability of their condition in order to constitute themselves as a "class". Legally, a class can be determined only by accident of birth, by such traits as race or sex. This explains the enormous interest in establishing sexual orientation as genetic or biological. Homosexuals want to be designated a "class" so that they can game the legal system for the spoils of discrimination. Therefore, this issue has huge legal and financial consequences.

Nonetheless, it is at least worth stating that the immutability theory cannot be sustained by the supposed existence of a "gay gene". There is no scientific evidence for it, which is not to say there may not be genetic influences on sexual orientation. This is the conclusion of some homosexual

scientists, such as Dr. Richard Pillard or neuroscientist Dr. Simon LeVay at the Salk Institute in San Diego, who have gone searching for it or for innate brain differences. Dr. Pillard, who was supposedly the first openly homosexual psychiatrist in the United States, has avidly sought for a genetic cause for homosexuality. In a 2010 Boston University interview, he admitted that "it's really hard to come up with any definite statement about the situation. I think some sort of genetic influence seems very likely, but beyond that, what really can we say? And the answer is: not a lot."²⁸

Dr. LeVay conducted a study of hypothalamic structures in men, which supposedly confirmed innate brain differences between homosexuals and heterosexuals, but he warned against misinterpreting his findings in a 1994 interview: "It's important to stress what I didn't find. I did not prove that homosexuality is genetic, or find a genetic cause for being gay. I didn't show that gay men are born that way, the most common mistake people make in interpreting my work. Nor did I locate a gay center in the brain."²⁹

Dr. Marc Breedlove, professor of neuroscience at Michigan State University, said, "Have we found a gene, where when a person inherits it, they will for certain be gay? No, we haven't found such a gene", though he stresses there are genetic influences on sexual orientation. Intriguingly, he stated in regard to his own research: "[My] findings give us proof for what we theoretically know to be the case—that sexual experience can alter the structure of the brain, just as genes can alter it. [I]t is possible that differences in sexual behavior cause (rather than are caused by) differences in the brain."³⁰

Dr. LeVay also stated that "it is possible to construct a hypothesis whereby both 'gay genes' and a desire to be homosexual are necessary for a person actually to become homosexual." From where might that desire to become homosexual come? Dr. Jeffrey Satinover mused that "the incidence of homosexuality is clearly influenced by mores. Where people endorse and encourage homosexuality, the incidence increases; where they reject it, it decreases. These factors have nothing to do with genetics."³¹

²⁸ Kimberly Cornuelle, "Nature vs. Nurture: The Biology of Sexuality", *BU Today*, November 16, 2010, <http://www.bu.edu/today/2010/nature-vs-nurture-the-biology-of-sexuality/>.

²⁹ Cited on Simon LeVay's home page at Golden Map, accessed August 1, 2013, http://en.goldenmap.com/Simon_LeVay.

³⁰ "Real Scientists Debunk JONAH's Junk Science", video, 2:35, posted by Wayne Besen, September 25, 2012, <http://www.truthwinsout.org/opinion/2012/09/29888/>.

³¹ Satinover, *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*, 116.

If there is no science to support it, the immutability theory nonetheless has generated significant political support. We can see the burgeoning significance of the matter in Attorney General Eric Holder's 2011 letter to the US Congress, explaining why the Obama administration would no longer defend the Defense of Marriage Act (which defined marriage as being between one man and one woman) in court. A group can be defined as a "class", explained Mr. Holder, if individuals "exhibit obvious, immutable, or distinguishing characteristics that define them as a discrete group". Therefore, everything hinges upon whether homosexuality is an *unchangeable* characteristic. Mr. Holder announced that "a growing scientific consensus accepts that sexual orientation is a characteristic that is immutable." So great is this consensus that, according to him, "we do not believe [claims to the contrary] can be reconciled with more recent social scientific understandings".³²

This bestows upon homosexuals the privilege of being a class, just as are blacks, Hispanics, or women. As a class, they can be discriminated against. Has there been such discrimination? Mr. Holder answers that "there is, regrettably, a significant history of purposeful discrimination against gay and lesbian people, by governmental as well as private entities, based on prejudice and stereotypes that continue to have ramifications today." One of those ongoing ramifications was the restriction of marriage to one man and one woman by the Defense of Marriage Act. Thus, he concluded, this law was discriminatory against homosexuals as a class and therefore unconstitutional and indefensible.

But let us try to put these claims in perspective. Let us say that in cannibals, cannibalism is an immutable characteristic. They simply can't stop eating people. Identifiable as cannibals, they could be discriminated against as a class. But this begs the question as to whether discrimination against them would be justified or not. Surely, one would think, it would be warranted because eating other people is wrong. Therefore, the discrimination against them is based not so much on cannibals as people, but on their activity of eating other people. If there were nothing wrong with eating other people, there would be no moral basis for discrimination against cannibals.

Likewise, even if homosexuality is an immutable characteristic, what distinguishes homosexuals is their sexual activity. Therefore, like cannibals,

³² Attorney General Eric Holder, "Letter from the Attorney General to Congress on Litigation Involving the Defense of Marriage Act", February 23, 2011, United States Department of Justice website, <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2011/February/11-ag-223.html>.